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Psychoprofile Calls Begin The 'Outsider'

Israel's embattled prime minister, Menachem Begin, though capable of statesmanship, "tends to revert to his former style of rigidity and narrowness of view that makes negotiations difficult." So warns a secret psychological profile prepared by U.S. intelligence experts.

Their appraisal is used as a guide by top U.S. policy makers who deal with Begin. If the Israeli leader should visit the White House, for example, the president would study a psychological profile.

He would be told that Begin is an activist: a puncher rather than a counterpuncher. "As an initiator, he is apt to strive for the dramatic to attract attention. When he reacts, however, he tends to be very cautious and precise."

The reason for this, the psychological profile suggests, is that Begin has spent most of his life "in the role of the opposer, the voice of a minority, an opponent of the establishment."

For five years he has stood at the center of the establishment. Yet he still has trouble conceiving of himself as a leading actor on the world stage

rather than as an angry voice from the wings.

The secret psychological profile has been reviewed by my associate Indy Badhwar. It represents the best assessment of Begin by experts on the Middle East. The highlights:

- "Begin is not considered, nor does he behave as, a man of compromise or flexibility. His image in the past has been that of a passionate believer in his position and an outspoken and somewhat crude or unrefined representative of the Holocaust philosophy. He represents the mentality of those Jews unable to update in their perspective the Nazi treatment of their brethren."

- Begin believes that "any expression of curbs on the sanctity of the Jewish state, or the potential Arab 'infringement' on Israeli territory" should be "dealt with severely."

- "To label his views as paranoid is inaccurate," the analysis says, adding, "At the same time one might admit that Mr. Begin is and was defensive and overly reactive to such so-called threats. He has built his entire life and political career on this basis."

- Even Begin's closest advisers have warned him not to behave like the underdog he was for so many years in Israeli politics. They urge Begin to become the spokesman for the Israeli people as a whole, "rather than [for] a strident and zealous minority" of ultra-conservative religious Jews who are outside the main-

stream of Israeli society. "Their strength is not great . . . but adherents may increase as the balance between Ashkenazi [western Jews] and Sephardic [Oriental Jews] changes in favor of the latter."

- Begin's role as the perennial outsider became evident in his public appearances with the late Egyptian President Anwar Sadat during the Camp David negotiations.

"Begin appeared to be under stress and uncomfortable," the profile says. "It was Sadat's show, and Begin behaved as if he were not sure what to do next. He was not in control, therefore uneasy."

Once this "unfamiliar and uncomfortable" role was over, the analysis noted, "Begin reverted to the 'minority behavior,' the strict and somewhat strident zealot's view of Biblical rights and overprotection of the Jewish state."